



Eat less without being hungry

HERE'S HOW

If you're trying to lose weight, you may already know that you need to cut calories. If you consume more calories than your body needs, it stores those extra calories as fat. To lose weight, you actually have to eat fewer calories than your body needs.

But cutting calories isn't always easy. Many people don't stick with diets because of one main reason: hunger. The body's hunger signals are nearly impossible to ignore. Your stomach growls, you feel tired, and you can't concentrate. Over time, your hunger becomes harder to fight, and you may give up on your diet or overeat.

It doesn't have to be this way. You can eat enough food to stay satisfied while still cutting calories. Experts say it's the amount and types of food you eat, not the number of calories that fills you up. The key is to choose "low-energy-dense foods," or foods low in calories that can still satisfy your hunger, according to the CDC. In general, these types of foods have lots of water content, high fiber, and/or very little fat.

Some of the best low-energy-dense foods include:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Beans and legumes
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy foods
- Broth-based soups (not cream-based ones)
- Whole grains (look for whole grains and fiber on the food label)

Think about a side-by-side comparison of low- versus high-energy-dense foods. One cup of french fries has 168 calories. But, one cup of salad with a tablespoon of low-calorie dressing has only 30 calories. You've just eaten the same amount of food, and slashed your calorie intake by more than 80 percent.

It's also a good idea to keep track of what you eat each day, so you have a clear picture of how many calories you're consuming. The ChooseMyPlate website at www.choosemyplate.gov has resources to help you focus on eating the right foods and making gradual, realistic changes to your diet for better health. No crash diets or hunger pangs are needed!

